CD2010 -- 45/46/47

Sir Ernest MacMillan Memorial Foundation 25th Anniversary

$12,000 Award in Orchestral Conducting
Final Selection Round

Finalists:
Ghassan Alaboud (Montreal)
Geneviève Leclair (Montreal)
Matthew Otto (Toronto)

Jurors: Victor Feldbrill, Tania Miller, Alain Trudel
David Briskin (Chair)

and including a performance by previous MacMillan Award recipients
Tokai String Quartet

MacMillan Theatre
Faculty of Music
University of Toronto

March 29, 2010
3:00 - 7:00pm

www.macmillanfoundation.com

Finalists will rehearse sections of
Berlioz *Symphonie fantastique*
with
University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra

3:00 Doors Open

3:10 Welcome: Ian MacMillan

3:15 First Finalist

4:00 Second finalist

4:45 Intermission

5:15 Third finalist

6:00 Intermission

6:15 Tokai String Quartet

Three Divertimenti – Britten
Two Sketches on French Canadian Airs - MacMillan

Award Announcement

Reception: in the lobby

Selection of the Finalists

In the Fall of 2009, the MacMillan Foundation award notice was distributed to music faculties and conservatories nation-wide, and posted on websites such as Orchestras Canada and the Conductors Guild. Application requirements included a DVD of the applicant in a live conducting performance, and an outline of the applicant's proposed plan of study and/or performance. Each application also had to be supported by two references, submitted directly to the Foundation by recognized members of the musical profession.

Applicants had to be less than thirty years of age as of March 1, 2010, and be either Canadian citizens, have permanent residency status, or have resided in Canada for at least three years prior to March 1, 2010.

The jury met in February to review the applications and select the three finalists.

The order in which the finalists perform today will be determined by random selection.

Finalists

Ghassan Alaboud

Ghassan Alaboud started piano lessons at the age of five at the music academy of Damascus, Syria. In 1999 he entered the Higher Institute of Music in Damascus to study piano with Svetlana Mirkoriva and Alexei Shmitov, and orchestral conducting with Viktor Babenko and Missac Bagbouderian. He graduated with merit in 2004. In 2005 he entered the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels, Belgium, to continue his studies in orchestral and choral conducting with Philippe Gérard and Charles Michiels.

Ghassan has attended several master classes with renowned conductors such as Maestro Angelo Guaragna at the Higher Institute of Music in Damascus and Maestro Jorma Panula at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Stockholm. He regularly conducted the orchestra and choir of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels in concert. He also worked as an assistant conductor to Maestro Jean Pierre Ockerman with the Choral St. Francesco and Musica Choir and Chamber Orchestra in Brussels.

He currently resides in Montreal and is preparing to continue his studies toward a doctoral degree in orchestral conducting.

Geneviève Leclair

Since September 2008, Geneviève Leclair has been pursuing her training in conducting as a doctoral student at Boston University under the tutelage of Maestro David Hoose, where she has conducted the **Boston University Orchestras** and has been assistant conductor for the **BU Opera Institute** production of *Thérèse Raquin*. Last spring, she won the position of apprentice conductor for the summer 2009 season of Boris Brott's **National Academy Orchestra of Canada**. From 2005 to 2008, Ms Leclair was General and Artistic Director of **Ensemble Euterpe**, a Montréal-based orchestra she also founded.

Geneviève has participated in a number of international conducting masterclasses including the Contemporary Music Conducting Workshop in Kromeriz, Czech Republic, the Orchestral Conducting Program at the National Arts Center in Ottawa, and the famous Conductor's Retreat at Medomak under the supervision of Maestro Kenneth Kiesler.

Geneviève obtained her master's degree in flute performance at the Université de Montréal, where she studied with Denis Bluteau, associate principal flautist of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra..

Matthew Otto

Matthew Otto is an active conductor, pianist, arranger and collaborator. Twice recipient of the Elmer Iseler Fellowship in Conducting, he received an undergraduate degree in Composition (2007) and completed a Masters of Music in Conducting at the University of Toronto (2009) studying with Doreen Rao, David Briskin, and Gary Kulesha ,as well as Lydia Wilmuth Rilling. From 2007 to2009, he was the assistant conductor of the **MacMillan Singers** and guest conducted the **Contemporary Music Ensemble** at U of T.

He has presented well-received performances of Bach's *St. John Passion,* Handel's *Messiah,* Vivaldi's *Gloria,* Golijov's *La Pasion segun San Marcos*, and will conduct Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* on Good Friday at the Newman Centre, University of Toronto, where he has been the Director of Music since 2006.

In addition, Matthew has directed a number of musical theatre performances and is currently the music director of *Sweet Charity* which will be presented by the Scarborough Music Theatre in May 2010.

An adept and active pianist, Matthew collaborates with local choirs, groups, vocalists and instrumentalists.

Jurors

Victor Feldbrill OC O.Ont.

Victor Feldbrill, conductor and violinist, studied conducting with Ettore Mazzoleni from 1942 to 1943. He was the conductor of the **University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra** from 1942 to 1943 and first conducted the **Toronto Symphony Orchestra** in 1943 at the invitation of Sir Ernest MacMillan. He was a first violin with the **Toronto Symphony Orchestra** from 1949 to 1956 and with the **CBC Symphony Orchestra** from 1952 to 1956, which he also guest conducted nineteen times. Beginning in 1957 he appeared annually as guest conductor for the BBC. In 1958 he became the conductor of the **Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra**, a position he retained until 1968. From 1990 to 1996 he was music director and principal conductor of the **Hamilton Philharmonic**.

He was the resident conductor for sessions of the **National Youth Orchestra** from 1960 to 1962 and in 1964, 1969, and 1975, and was the founding conductor and music director of the **Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra** from 1974 to 1978. He was on the staff of the University of Toronto from 1968 to 1982, assuming duties as conductor of the **University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra** in 1968 and conductor-in-residence in 1972. In 1979 he began an annual association with the Tokyo National University of Art and Music that resulted in his appointment as a professor in 1981, and as principal conductor of the university's **Geidai Philharmonia** in 1982. He was guest conductor of orchestras throughout Japan.

Honours include the American Concert Guild Award for encouragement of young performers, the Canadian Music Citation from the League of Canadian Composers, the

Jurors (cont'd)

Roy Thomson Hall award, and a medal from the City of Tokyo in recognition of his services to music and to youth. He was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1985 received an honorary degree from Brock University in 1991, and was named to the Ord of Ontario in 1999.

Tania Miller

The 2009-2010 season marks Tania Miller's seventh as music director of the **Victoria Symphony Orchestra**, an appointment that made her the first Canadian woman to be appointed to such a significant position in Canada. Her vibrancy and dynamic approach to music making have inspired many innovations and a new era of artistic growth for the orchestra.

Prior to her appointment in Victoria, she was assistant and then associate conductor with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra for four seasons. She was the assistant conductor of the Carmel Bach Festival for several years, working closely with the internationally renowned conductor Bruno Weil and many of the world's leading Baroque artists. She made her debut with the **Toronto Symphony Orchestra** as guest conductor in 2003, and has appeared with the **Vancouver Symphony Orchestra**; the **Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra**; the **Orchestra Métropolitain du Grand Montréal** ; the **Saskatoon, Windsor,** and **Winnipeg symphony orchestras**, and Toronto's **ERGO ensemble**, with whom she premiered a number of compositions in Munich, Toronto and New York. Increasingly in demand in the USA and Europe, she has guest conducted the **Oregon Symphony**, the **Toledo Symphony** and the **Seattle Youth Symphony**, and in 2006 made her debut in Switzerland with the **Bern Symphony Orchestra**, to which she returns this year.

She attended the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she was awarded the Ernest T. Jones Conducting Scholarship in 1997 and completed her doctoral studies in opera ar orchestral conducting under Robert Reynolds and Kenneth Kiesler in 2000.

Alain Trudel

Music director of ***l'Orchestre Symphonique de Laval*** and Principal Guest Conductor of the **Victoria Symphony Orchestra** Alain Trudel is a highly sought after conductor.

He is the founding Music Director of the **National Broadcast Orchestra**, recently established to continue the mission of the former **CBC Radio Orchestra** for which he was the Principal Conductor. The mandate of the NBO will be to feature Canadian composers and performers and to emphasize musical education.

Trudel was unanimously named Conductor of the **Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra** in 2004, a position he still holds and that brings him great pride and joy.
In the summer of 2009 he conducted the final round and gala concert of the Montreal

international music competition. During the rest of the summer he toured with the **National Youth Orchestra of Canada**. Their recording of Mahler's *6th Symphony* and Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps* is in nomination for best orchestral recording at the 2010 **Junos Awards**.

From 2005 to 2008 he conducted the **Toronto Symphony Orchestra** on their Ontario tours. He also served as Artistic Advisor to the **Manitoba Chamber Orchestra** from 2006 to 2008.

Alain Trudel has conducted orchestras in the UK, the USA, Japan, Hong Kong, South America, and Sweden. Highly appreciated for his collaborative spirit he has worked with many world famous soloists, among them Ben Heppner, Anton Kuerti, and Measha Brueggergosman.

Alain Trudel is the recipient of numerous awards, among them the **Virginia Parker,** Le **grand prix de l'Académie Charles Cros** (France), the **Choc de l'Année of Le Monde la Musique**, and more recently the **Heinz Unger Prize for Conducting** and the **CMC ambassador of Canadian music**.

David Briskin (Chair*)

David Briskin is Director of Orchestral Studies and Conductor of the **University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra**.

Internationally recognized as a conductor of uncommon versatility, David Briskin is Music Director and Principal Conductor of **The National Ballet of Canada**. For seven years he served as conductor with **American Ballet Theater** where he led performances at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York's City Center and in major opera houses throughout the USA, Europe, South America and Asia. He appears frequently as a guest conductor with such companies as **San Francisco Ballet**, **Houston Ballet**, and **New York City Ballet**.

In addition to his work in dance, Mr. Briskin has enjoyed great success on the concert stage. He has conducted the **Pittsburgh, Detroit, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Syracuse, Akron, Cincinnati Pops,** and **Singapore Symphony Orchestras**; the **Hong Kong Philharmonic**, the **Juilliard Symphony** and the **National Symphony Orchestra of** Costa Rica, among others. Mr. Briskin also served as a regular guest conductor at the Juilliard School for more than 10 years.

Equally at home in the opera house, Mr. Briskin's opera schedule has taken him throughout the USA, Canada and Europe, including performances of *La Bohème* in Italy; Calgary Opera (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), Manitoba Opera (*Carmen*), Opera Carolina (*Candide, Falstaff, and Don Giovanni*), Opera Columbus (*Le Nozze di Figaro*), New England Conservatory (*Albert Herring*), Sarasota Opera *(Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), and Lake George Opera *(Die Entführung aus dem Seraglio*).

Jurors (cont'd)

He holds a Bachelor of Music degree in orchestral conducting from the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and a Master of Arts degree from Queens College, City University of New York.

Tokai String Quartet

Co-winners of the Sir Ernest MacMillan Memorial Foundation's award in chamber music in 2004, the Tokai String Quartet is regarded as one of Canada's leading string ensembles. The quartet had its beginnings in 2002 at the University of Toronto where they benefited from the guidance of the late Lorand Fenyves. The MacMillan Award facilitated their participation in residencies at the Banff Centre for the Arts and at the Stanford Summer Music Festival. The members of the St. Lawrence Quartet have been significant mentors to the Tokai through their Summer Music Seminars at Stanford. In September 2007, the Tokai became prizewinners at the Banff International String Quartet Competition, the first Canadian group to do so since the St. Lawrence in 1992.

The Tokai have been praised for their "emotional investment" and "decisive" interpretations (*Toronto Star*) and "intense" and "hot-blooded" performances (*Globe and Mail*). Audiences have seen the quartet perform across Canada at various music festivals including The Toronto Summer Music Festival the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival and the Concerts aux Îles du Bic Chamber Music Festival in Quebec. They also performed an extensive concert tour of Atlantic Canada in March 2007 awarded by Debut Atlantic.

The Tokai Quartet has been ensemble-in-residence at Queen's University in Kingston, the Southern Ontario Chamber Music Institute, and Music at Port Milford. In 2010 they participated in the SLSQ Emerging String Quartet Program performing and teaching at the Stanford University as well as participating in outreach activities at numerous schools and other venues.

In addition to the MacMillan Award, the Tokai were recipients of the Felix Galimir Award in 2003 and the award of a debut concert presented by the Frederick Gaviller Music Foundation, which took place in April 2005.

*The chair of the jury oversees development of the award application requirements and facilitates the jury's deliberations, but does not vote. While this position is normally fulfilled by a trustee of the Foundation, Mr. Briskin generously offered to take on these responsibilities this year.